

My name is Helen Pentelow, I am a business owner, a member of the WisWin Group & a resident in the town for 42 years. Our family business was established in 2008 on Europa Way. 10 years later we expanded with the introduction of a second business. We outgrew our premises and moved to our current location on Algores Way in 2020. Our workshop is approximately 200m from the proposed site of the incinerator.

We employ 16 people and we work primarily for the film and transport sectors and our main customers include Warner Bros, Pinewood Studios & Universal Studios as well as many other companies nationally and locally. On an average day, we would have around 30 vehicles visiting our premises to either drop off raw materials, or to collect goods we have manufactured.

Our main customers from the film industry mentioned earlier are all based in London. They use our company in Wisbech as we offer exceptional service and a very quick turnaround. There are clearly other businesses in London offering the same service as us but they choose to use our business in Wisbech, over 2 hours away which we are immensely proud of. Their lorries drive from London on a regular basis to collect the goods we have manufactured. Delays of any nature are not acceptable to these multinational companies so any disruption to Algores Way for whatever reason would affect our business and all the others along there. I can categorically say if we lost our film industry customers due to potential delays caused by road closures, digging, traffic lights etc etc then that would be the end of our business.

Inevitably, due to the proposed 4 year build of such a huge project, Algores Way would without doubt be considerably affected with road closures, digging, noise, and constant construction traffic etc. A number of businesses on the road need access to their premises 24 hours a day due to the nature of their business with twilight shifts therefore if potential road closures were in place at night this could be catastrophic to these businesses. There would potentially be 500 construction workers on site at any one time, just 200m from my business and many others.

There are over 40 businesses located on Algores Way and Europa Way combined & all rely on the road being open without disruption to run their businesses effectively. There are approximately 400 people employed on Algores Way & Europa Way - significantly more than the alleged 32 jobs generated by the proposed incinerator. In this difficult financial climate the companies on the industrial estate cannot afford disruptions to their business for one week, never mind for 4 years. Many local food factories in the immediate vicinity of the incinerator would be forced to close resulting in the loss of 100s of jobs.

In the MVV documentation compulsory purchase of Algores Way has been mentioned. This is extremely concerning to all businesses involved as you can imagine. I gather a letter was recently hand delivered to "all businesses" explaining the reasons behind the proposed compulsory purchase. I know of only one business who has received this letter. Businesses require assurances that they would be able to access their premises at all times and not have this revoked at any time in the future and that their access would not be affected in any way shape or form at any time by anything relating to the construction of the incinerator. There has been much confusion and worry regarding this proposed compulsory purchase, & it wasn't mentioned at the many Consultation Meetings I attended initially, Business owners all feel there has been a clear lack of consultation throughout the process especially due to our location within metres of the proposed facility.

As a business owner I first heard about the potential compulsory purchase of Algores Way in October 2022 from a friend who happened to read about it on the MVV website. Another local business (Priden Engineering) then queried the details of the compulsory purchase in early 2023 with MVV. AT NO POINT PRIOR TO THIS DID MVV CONTACT ANY BUSINESSES TO EXPLAIN THERE MAY BE A COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF THE ROAD. Businesses only then received a letter regarding the issue in February 2023 – 4 months after it had been added to their documentation. ***This clearly demonstrates their total lack of consultation with the businesses who would be directly affected by the proposed compulsory purchase.*** The original documents we saw regarding this matter just showed a map of the road and the fact it was to be the subject of a compulsory purchase. No reasons or explanations were given. I should not have to read on line that my business might be severely affected or compromised, MVV should have had the decency to contact me directly.

Having spoken to many companies in the area over the last 3 years, they feel their businesses & livelihoods will be put at risk by the major disruption caused due to the 4 year build, not to mention the traffic issues once it is actually built. Algores Way is such a small narrow road in the middle of our town centre and not at all suitable for the access for construction traffic for a National Significant Infrastructure Project – this is a small Georgian town, not a large city like Plymouth. Algores Way, is accessed via Weasenham Lane – very well known in Wisbech for it's road closures, sink holes, burst water mains and other issues. A small school child has already been killed on Weasenham Lane. MVV has stated that lorries will only travel a certain way to the incinerator and that locals should report any vehicles they see not adhering to this which I find unbelievable. Fenland Gymnastics Academy is located on Algores Way. They often have 200 young children (some as young as 3 years old) getting out of cars parked on Algores Way to enter the premises. This road is TOTALLY unsuitable for construction traffic given the location – IN THE CENTRE OF OUR TOWN.

There is also another school at No. 2 Algores Way – a Social, Emotional & Mental Health specialist school. This school is within METRES of the proposed incinerator. The children at the school are vulnerable and have often been seen running out of the school onto the road. Surely the location of an incinerator adjacent to such a school is totally unacceptable? Thomas Clarkson Academy with over 1000 pupils is located 700m from the proposed site. Many pupils bike to school along Weasenham Lane which will be used for all the construction traffic – again a disaster waiting to happen.

Decision makers on this NSIP have no idea the destruction this incinerator would cause to local business in our small town because they don't know the town, and it would be catastrophic for many businesses on Algores Way. I am just one business owner but I speak on behalf of many others and we feel the incinerator would result in the demise of many businesses in our town and would have a major impact on our local economy and employment. The effect on local businesses cannot simply be swept under the carpet. MVV seem to give the impression that the incinerator would not be located in the centre of our town to those not familiar with the town. Weasenham Lane and Algores Way ARE in the centre of our town and there are many houses and 2 schools in the immediate vicinity.

The comparisons with the Plymouth incinerator cannot be made – that is a much smaller incinerator in a large CITY of 264,000 people. Wisbech is a small TOWN of 31,000 population but the incinerator proposed here is a NSIP and one of the largest in the country. MVV have asked the Planning Inspectorate to visit the Plymouth incinerator – this comparison is totally irrelevant. The road systems are not the same, the demographics are not the same, the population is not the same and the size of the incinerator is not the same.

Finally, the MD of MVV, Mr Paul Carey, has constantly spoken down to the people of our town. Dismissing our concerns and being rude to the people at the open floor meetings and consultations. He has no understanding or concept of the feeling local people have, nor does he care.

I would urge the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State to take my objections into consideration and refuse this incinerator.

Thank you for reading my written submission

Helen Pentelow